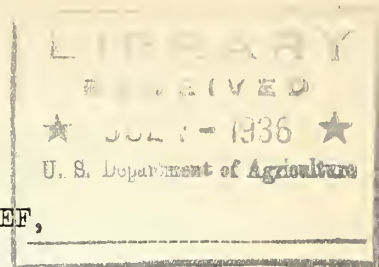


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ADDRESS BY E. A. SHERMAN, ASSISTANT CHIEF,
U. S. FOREST SERVICE, AT DEDICATION OF
STUART FOREST NURSERY, KISATCHIE NATIONAL
FOREST, LOUISIANA, JUNE 17, 1936

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Following is the address of E. A. Sherman, Assistant Chief of the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, at the dedication (June 17, 1936), of the Stuart Nursery in memory of Robert Young Stuart, late Chief of the Forest Service. The Stuart Nursery, established by the Forest Service in 1933, is located in the Kisatchie National Forest, at Powell, Louisiana, and will have an annual capacity of 50 million trees for reforestation purposes.

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I can think of no better way to honor the memory of an outstanding forester than to name a forest tree nursery for him. I can think of no better way to honor the memory of Robert Young Stuart than by giving his name to this particular nursery -- the largest in the South, and one of the largest in the world. For Major Stuart, as Chief of the United States Forest Service, was particularly interested in the expansion of forestry in the South, and in the reforestation phase of our national forest conservation program.

Creation of this nursery on the Kisatchie National Forest was decided upon before his untimely passing; it is, then, a fruition of his desire; the sturdy growth from a seed of his planting.

It is, I know, one of the characteristics of our age that we measure the value of things by their magnitude; to say that this is the biggest, the tallest,

or that this was done in the shortest time, or cost the most money -- these are common expressions of modern pride. But to sincere foresters, size and cost and speed are not the only measuring sticks; for the growth of a tree, of a forest, is a manifestation of Nature, and Nature spans more than the lifetime of a man. But when we say that here in the Stuart Nursery more seedlings than ever before are being grown and shipped to reforest more acres in the South than has ever been done before, we are not boasting of speed and cost and size. We are expressing the pride of a job done which called for quick and sure action; a job that will bring large and continuing results in human welfare.

Through six years, Major Stuart, as Chief of the Forest Service, went through one of the most important phases of governmental forestry. It was a crucial period -- yet a period that caused few headlines in the papers. -- Glory, fame -- these things were forgotten in his steady, incredibly difficult fight for an expansion of forest conservation throughout a country that badly needed strong leadership to save its vanishing resources. The job that Major Stuart took over as head of the Forest Service needed, cried for, a man of exactly his calibre. Strong, sure, unhurried, unflustered -- and hardheaded in matters he knew to be right -- he kept the Forest Service moving forward, strengthening its position, spreading more valuable information, moving toward that time he must have felt was coming when national attention and national interest would center as never before upon the Forest Service's function for the good of the nation. It is to the end of everlasting Justice that he lived to see our national policy embrace conservation as one of its major programs, in strong, liberal support of the principles he had labored to uphold.

His name lives on; his work lives on; his spirit is far from forgotten among the men of the Forest Service who worked with him, fought beside him, trekked

the wildernesses with him. Without being too fanciful, I think we may consider that each of the millions of trees which will grow from the seedlings produced in the Stuart Nursery will bear some part of his indomitable spirit.

It is difficult for me to speak of "Bob" Stuart without personal emotion. I knew him almost as a father knows his son. After his graduation from Yale in 1906 his first regular assignment in the West was as my Forest Assistant at Missoula, Montana, when I was a Forest Supervisor. From our first meeting to the day of his death, ours was an association of perfect understanding. During the first few years of that association he was my subordinate; during the last six he was my chief. I rejoice that no unkind word ever passed between us and that I never knew him to give utterance to an unworthy thought.

He was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent, educated in the public schools of Harrisburg and Carlisle, and at Dickinson College. After his graduation from that institution, he attended the Yale School of Forestry, class of 1906. In 1912 he was transferred to the Washington office of the Forest Service where he served until the entry of the United States into the World War. He was placed on military leave and commissioned Captain in the 10th -- or Forest -- Engineer Regiment, later being promoted to the rank of Major. For his services in the American Expeditionary Force, he received a citation from General Pershing.

In May, 1920, he resigned from the U. S. Forest Service to accept the Deputy Commissionership of Forestry in Pennsylvania, under Gifford Pinchot, one of the nation's great foresters and first chief of the Forest Service. Major Stuart was later made Secretary of Forests and Waters, following Pinchot's election as Governor. At the expiration of Governor Pinchot's term of office, Major Stuart reentered the Forest Service in charge of the Branch of Public Relations and on May 1, 1928, was appointed Chief Forester, succeeding Colonel William B. Greeley. He served until October 23, 1933 when his sudden death brought his work to a close. He died in line of duty.

The last year of his life had been a trying one. Less than a month after the inauguration of President Roosevelt, the Unemployment Relief Act opened the way for carrying out the President's plan for organizing the Civilian Conservation Corps. New and heavy responsibilities were at once placed on the Forest Service and on Major Stuart. These greatly increased as the general recovery program took shape, through allotments of twenty million dollars for the resumption and tremendous acceleration of land acquisition for national forest purposes and of forty million dollars for construction and improvement work on the national forests themselves. Major Stuart responded with joyful eagerness to the heavy demands, for this was, in a manner of speaking, the fruition of all he had been working for in the years he served as Chief Forester.

Nowhere was this accelerated program put into more widespread effect than in the South. Realizing the great natural advantages possessed by the southern states for profitable timber growing, and of the combination of situations which had greatly retarded progress in this line, much of Major Stuart's attention was directed to this section of the country. The Stuart Nursery has played and is still playing a tremendous role in the program of rehabilitation, thus carrying through one of Robert Stuart's most cherished projects.

Prior to 1934, the entire eastern half of the nation was classed as one National Forest region. With the tremendous upswing of development work it was decided that the time had come to create a separate Southern Region, with headquarters in Atlanta. From that time on the national forest areas in the Southern Region have grown extensively under plans already carefully laid out during Major Stuart's period as Chief Forester through an acquisition program which has greatly added, not only to the extent of the existing southern National Forests, but has brought about the creation of many new national forest purchase units.

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I think we must all be familiar with the conditions which brought about the necessity for such an expansion of forest areas under government administration, because, in regions like the South, forest resources are part of the major pattern woven into the economic life. Certainly in the matter of southern pine we touch the basic industry which supports a tremendous share of the population of the South.

But the story in the South, just as it has been in the once-magnificently forested north woodlands, has, in the past, been one of unwise wholesale cutting, and of the aftermath -- fire, which stalked unchecked through those areas skinned of their value. Through tax delinquency more and more of these acres in the past twenty years have been floating in that half-world between private and public ownership. These barren lands where natural reproduction was stopped because of fire, were more than simply "out of circulation". They represented a dead weight, growing heavier, around the neck of the public.

In many cases submarginal for farming, the prime service these lands were suited to perform was that of growing timber; they were shut off from that. Worse yet, these lands are the vital controls of the watersheds; their protective value is worth inestimable millions of dollars. Denuded, devastated, they can no longer check the flow of rainfall which, carving scar-like gullies, washes away annually millions of cubic feet of top soil; scarifying once-fertile farm lands with erosion, swelling the major streams to flood proportions which in turn sweep away the works, the homes and the lives of men.

Upon these forest lands depend in a thousand different ways the lives and wellbeing of whole communities. But in the wake of exploitation and misuse has come a desolate trail of "ghost towns", communities which once thrived on forest industry, but whose source of supply has been destroyed. The inhabitants of these communities have helped to swell our relief rolls; the tradesmen dependent upon these communities have had to look elsewhere for customers, and have not always succeeded. The buildings, the land, have gone for taxes. It is not a pretty picture.

The Forest Service sees, as Major Stuart saw, the need for rehabilitation of such forest areas, for development of stable, continuous production from our forest lands. Through Federal forest extension, and through cooperation with the States and with private owners it is endeavoring to change the picture from a "cut-out-and-get-out" system to one of sustained production and of sustained and stable industries and communities. Devasted lands approved for purchase as nuclei of future national forests and many acres of them incorporated into existing National Forests, have become reservoirs of labor-demand which have supplied thousands of men with healthful, non-competitive employment. This is laying groundwork for the rehabilitation of these areas so that in the future they may play their part in protecting the watersheds, thereby saving untold millions of dollars in damage by floods and erosion; in providing once more a source of income from forest products and forest industry; and in greatly expanding facilities for wholesome, outdoor recreation for the people of cities, towns and villages.

The story is told that early in 1933 one of President Roosevelt's advisors came to Major Stuart and asked him if, within a few weeks, the Forest Service could put some hundreds of thousands of men to work on useful projects in the country's forests. Perhaps Bob Stuart swallowed a little, but he answered simple, "Yes".

"But a hundred thousand men is a lot of men", the advisor said. "Maybe you don't realize what a large order that is."

"You don't know the Forest Service", was Bob Stuart's answer.

It might be added that he didn't know Bob Stuart.

That was the beginning of the CCC. Thus, with the U. S. Forest Service under the leadership of Major Stuart carrying a large share of the load, hundreds of Civilian Conservation Corps camps were established to begin the work of forest rehabilitation and improvement throughout the country, including southern forest lands. The principal work of these young men in the South has included protection of the woodlands against fire, and reforestation of denuded areas. It is, of course, the second job that interests us most here at the Stuart Nursery. But first, about fire:

Growing conditions in the southern states favor the production of timber: If fire is kept out of the forests, both natural and artificial reforestation has a healthy chance of success. Therefore much of the forest work has been in the opening of more and more areas to modern forest fire fighting and prevention. This has called for the construction of many miles of truck trails and telephone lines, for the construction of look-out towers, and for the removal of fire hazards from road and trailside. Those camps on private timberlands, which are operated on a Federal-State and private owner cooperative basis, have concentrated solely on such work.

Of equal importance to the new Southern Region has been the job of planting, and, of course, growing the seedlings for reforestation. In 1934, with land-acquisition proceeding at an accelerated rate, plans were laid to make it possible to reforest from 800,000 to 900,000 acres over a ten-year period. Original plans for construction and development of the Stuart Nursery, which came into being in 1933, called for a ten million seedling production. In 1934, these plans were carried out. But after considering the planting needs in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, it was decided to enlarge the nursery to a 35,000,000 seedling production. The quota for 1935 was later increased to 42,000,000, which, with only a very small percentage of loss, was reached. All this called for a tremendous energy output, for with acres constantly being added to the National Forest areas it was necessary to start reforestation as soon as possible. As for the labor necessary to do the work, almost all of it was supplied by the CCC camps located within a short distance of these grounds. These men have done a job to be proud of.

The Stuart Nursery has furnished the bulk of its seedlings to the Kisatchie National Forest nearby, to the DeSoto in Mississippi, and to the Sam Houston in

Texas. Many thousands have been shipped to the Florida forests.

We of the Forest Service like to consider our jobs as being more important than the men who hold them. Others will carry on as we drop out of the picture. This is necessary, for we are working for the future. Major Robert Young Stuart held this viewpoint strongly; thus it is more than fitting that this nursery, which is growing young trees for future production of timber for sawlogs, pulpwood and naval stores, should bear his name. The work he started continues; the trees we plant grow, bear seeds, which in turn reproduce the species. It is up to the people of the nation today, and to the future generations as well, to consider themselves as having accepted the stewardship of the forests--with definite obligations to take care of them while they live--and to pass on their ever-productive heritage to future generations.

- B M P -

